Writing To Your Lawmakers or Government Officials

Tips For Writing An Effective Letter

• **Keep it short.** One typewritten page, two at most. Don’t write on the back of a page. If writing longhand, make sure it is legible.

• **State your purpose** in the first paragraph. Mention a bill, action or issue by name or by number.

• **Be clear and factual** in stating your concerns. Stick to the subject.

• **Make it personal.** How does the issue affect you? Your children? Your home? Your workplace? Is there a local issue that is related?

• **Ask for a response.** Include your name and street address (even if you send email), because some offices reply only through the post office.

Forms of Address

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Honorable ________________</td>
<td>The Honorable ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Senate</td>
<td>Governor of California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate Office Building</td>
<td>1st Floor State Capitol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC 20510</td>
<td>Sacramento, CA 95814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear Senator ________________</td>
<td>Dear Governor ________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<td>The Honorable ________________</td>
<td>The Honorable ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States House of Representatives</td>
<td>California State Senate or Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Office Building</td>
<td>Capitol Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC 20515</td>
<td>Sacramento, CA 95814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear Representative ________________</td>
<td>Dear Senator or Assemblyman/woman ________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reference Books

Note that Reference Books are dated and that the names of government officials may have changed since publication. Internet sites may provide more up to date information (see the Internet Sites section below).

Federal

Congressional Directory                                       Ref JK 1011.U58
Congressional Staff Directory                                  Ref JK 1012.C65

California

California Roster                                              Ref JK8730.C36
California Lobbyists/PAC Directory                             Ref JK 8730 2000 C314
California Local Government Directory                         Ref JK 8730 2001 C315

Associations or Organizations of Personal Interest

Encyclopedia of Associations                                   Ref HS 17.G344 v.1-3

Start with the Keyword List in volume 3 when using this encyclopedia. The number you will see next to each keyword is an entry number rather than a page number. You will find the entries listed in Volume 1 or 2. There is a User’s Guide in the front of each volume if you need help getting started.

Internet Sites

Note that Internet sites may provide the most up to date information since people in public office change with every election. Go to the Library’s Easy Access Page www.westvalley.edu/wvc/pat and click on the “Selected Web Resources” button. Look at the Topic list on the right and click on Government to find some useful web sites.

Federal

Write your federal representative www.visi.com/juan/congress/
(Federal Departments and Agencies) thomas.loc.gov
Thomas Federal Legislative Information www.loc.gov/law/guide
Guide to Law Online

State

California Legislative Information www.leginfo.ca.gov
California State Assembly www.assembly.ca.gov/defaulttext.asp
California State Senate www.senate.ca.gov

Associations

Associations on the net www.ipl.org/div/aon/